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ADDRESS OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS TO
THE DIRECTOR OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON

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August 20, 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
David K. Bruce
Under Secretary of State

The Honorable
William C. Foster
Deputy Secretary of Defense

General Walter B. Smith
Director of Central Intelligence

Subject: Draft Paper on a Strategic Concept (PSB D-31)

The attached paper is the result of over half a year's work by a high-level group under the chairmanship of Vice Admiral Stevens. The project was initiated on instructions from Mr. Gray. Its purpose was to produce, if possible, a strategic concept for a national psychological program.

Compared to the hopes with which the project was launched, the outcome represents a disillusion which can be salutary, and corresponds to a similar trend of national policy thinking reflected in NSC 135/1. The implications would be clearer however if the paper, instead of struggling on the brink of tautology to rescue an "interim strategic concept," had simply left it that under present capabilities a strategic concept is impossible. That would have highlighted the urgency of acquiring the requisite capabilities and at least raised the question of how much time we have.

The positive aspect of the paper lies in its relation to NSC 10/5, which directs PSB to include in its concept provision for covert operations designed to achieve 10/5 objectives. To this end the paper offers some specific emphases and criteria for cold war 10/5 operations.

For this reason, I recommend that the Board approve the recommendations after inserting in paragraph 2, page 9, after "emphasis" the phrase "in those operations," in order to make clear that particular reference to cold war operations under NSC 10/5 holds for this and subsequent paragraphs.

NSC review(s) completed.

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY
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Since the paper has already been cleared at fairly high levels in the member agencies, I propose to bring it up at an early luncheon meeting unless you prefer to handle it in another manner. If the latter is the case, please let me know.

R.B. Allen
Raymond B. Allen
Director

1 Enclosure:

PSB D-31.

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SECURITY INFORMATIONCOPY NO. 13

PSB D-31

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August 5, 1952

EYES ONLY

A STRATEGIC CONCEPT FOR A NATIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PROGRAM *
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLD WAR OPERATIONS
UNDER NSC 10/5

1. Almost all governmental policies and actions have psychological content in that they bear on the minds and wills of other peoples. An attempt to formulate a national psychological strategy covering every intention and action having psychological impact in this sense would encompass every aspect of governmental activity. This would be an effort of unmanageable proportions. In order to formulate a national psychological strategy that will usefully subserve the national policy it is necessary to divide the task into separate aspects of manageable proportions. When we ask, "What can usefully be said about ways and means of bringing about a retraction of Soviet power and influence?" we have selected one such aspect and have stated it in such a way that we can perhaps deal with it. The following does not attempt to deal with the problems involved in the distribution of resources between cold war operations and preparations in support of overt war.

2. NSC 10/5, paragraph 1, approved "the intensification of covert operations designed in general order of emphasis to:

a. Place the maximum strain on the Soviet structure of power, including the relationships between the USSR, its satellites and Communist China; and when and where appropriate in the light of U. S. and Soviet capabilities and the risk of war, contribute to the retraction and reduction of Soviet power and influence to limits which no longer constitute a threat to U. S. security.

* In accordance with Presidential Directive of 4 April 1951, which establishes the PSB as responsible for the formulation and promulgation, as guidance to the departments and agencies represented for psychological operations of over-all national psychological objectives, policies and programs, and which defines psychological operations as including all activities under NSC 59/1 and 10/2.

b. Strengthen the orientation toward the United States of the peoples and nations of the free world, and increase their capacity and will to resist Soviet domination.

c. Develop underground resistance and facilitate covert and guerrilla operations in strategic areas to the maximum practicable extent consistent with 1-a. above"

3. NSC 10/5, paragraph 2, directed "the Psychological Strategy Board to assure that its strategic concept for a national psychological program includes provision for covert operations designed to achieve the objectives in paragraph 1 above."

4. It is the object of this paper to outline a strategic concept for a national psychological program with particular reference to cold war operations under NSC 10/5. These operations are primarily covert in character, but we believe a paper addressed ^{to} such operations will provide a concept valuable to overt psychological operations under NSC 59/1 as well, especially those which are concerned with bringing about the retraction of Soviet power and influence.

5. The general objective of psychological operations in the cold war can be subsumed under the general heading of contributing to the "retraction and reduction of Soviet power and influence" whether by operations designed to weaken Soviet power in the Communist orbit or by operations designed to weaken Soviet influence by strengthening the free world.

6. Our national strategy, as defined in NSC 20/4, paragraph 20, is to "endeavor to achieve our general objectives by methods short of war." This national strategy calls for efforts to "encourage and promote the gradual retraction of undue Russian power and influence from the present perimeter areas around traditional Russian boundaries . . . ; to eradicate the myth by which people remote from Soviet military influence are held in a position of subservience to Moscow . . . ; (and) to create situations which will compel the Soviet government to recognize the practical undesirability of acting on the basis of its present concepts"

7. In the absence of open hostilities, the cold war can be expected to continue in one form or another as long as the Soviet Union, which is

to say, the Bolshevik Party, adheres to the aims and methods which it has pursued ever since its accession to power, within as well as outside the Party. Recognition of this - particularly public recognition - is necessary for understanding and support of continuity of effort. The overthrow of the Party by war or successful revolution appears to be the only certain means of forcing such changes. One is excluded, and the other so far beyond our current capabilities as to be presently unfeasible.

8. We are unable at present to propose a strategic concept which outlines a program designed to bring about a final solution of the cold war because (a) we do not have and cannot clearly foresee the time when we will have the capabilities, and (b), because without adequate capabilities the risks involved are clearly disproportionate to the probabilities of success. The time required to develop the necessary capabilities is so great that the nature of an acceptable solution cannot be determined with sufficient accuracy to serve as a guide. As our capabilities increase, flexibility and opportunism in the light of events appear presently more desirable than commitment to too specific a goal.

9. We should continue to develop our capabilities for assisting revolution and continue to re-appraise the situation. This will require both the development of further capabilities for the exploitation of existing techniques and a major program for the development of new techniques and approaches. It is possible that the cumulative effect of retraction of Soviet power and influence, together with future events and the inherent problems with which the Soviet government and the Bolshevik Party are faced may eventually bring about sufficient change in their aims and methods to provide an acceptable solution. Efforts to develop our capabilities and to bring about such a retraction as opposed to a program for a definitive solution may be regarded as the interim strategic concept for a national psychological program.

10. Within the limits imposed by the terms of our national strategy

and the present level of our covert capabilities it is possible to advance certain general criteria for operations under 10/5, to test broad fields of possible covert action against these criteria, and from a combination of the two to give more precise form to the psychological operations which should be prosecuted in accordance with the interim strategic concept, and to provide an indication of priorities. Overt propaganda should give appropriate support in accordance with priorities as may be determined.

11. The general criteria which present covert operations under the interim strategic concept should meet are those of effectiveness, feasibility, acceptable risk, and flexibility.

a. Effectiveness: The importance of the effects which successful operations may be calculated to have in reducing Soviet influence and power or in strengthening the free world against the exertion of Soviet influence and power must be appreciable and must warrant the effort, cost and risk of the operation. In general, priorities should be proportional to anticipated effectiveness.

b. Feasibility: Our capabilities in terms of trained manpower or material, and local or international support, must be adequate to give reasonable promise of success to the operation in the face of such capabilities as the Communists may have to frustrate it.

c. Acceptable risk: The degree to which the undertaking or successful conclusion of the operations may be calculated to provoke military reaction from the Communists must be sufficiently limited as to be an acceptable risk in terms of our national strategy.

d. Flexibility: Operations should be of a type which lend themselves within reasonable limits to adaptation or modification to exploit such opportunities or undertake such objectives as may become possible or advisable subsequent to actual initiation of the operation.

12. There is a wide range of activity currently in process to bring about the retraction of Soviet power and influence which should

continue. Many of these activities, although in themselves incapable of producing clear and incontrovertible gains, are of great value in supporting overt policies which can be expected to be effective. Omission from the following discussion of many existing projects, does not imply that they are not considered of value, but rather that the approved projects should continue as presently conceived and planned, insofar as they meet the above criteria.

13. Within the field of cold war covert operations, it is considered that greatest emphasis should be placed upon the following broad fields of activity, not necessarily in order of priority:

a. Weakening of Kremlin control over the internal assets of the Soviet-controlled bloc, and increasingly occupying the Kremlin with problems within this area.

b. Direct action to reduce subversive Soviet influence in those areas of the free world that are most immediately threatened thereby.

c. Covert manipulation of key elements in unstable countries of the free world to increase the stability and utility to the objectives of U. S. foreign policy of those countries.

14. Within these three broad fields of activity, the following categories meet the criteria outlined above and should be given greater emphasis than they are currently receiving. Detailed studies may reveal that effective action within some of these categories is beyond our capabilities. Also, events will undoubtedly indicate the desirability of concentration on other lines of effort. This will require continuous review of interim strategic policy.

a. Disintegration of Communist Parties Outside the Iron Curtain.

Communist parties in the free world are principal vehicles for Soviet subversion. They are also much more accessible to us than are those within the Iron Curtain. By a combination of covert and overt action their effectiveness can be appreciably reduced and in some areas totally nullified. Some of the means that can be employed are (a) reduction

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success of the operation should be appraised.

If such studies continue to indicate feasibility, the State Department should investigate the feasibility and effectiveness of obtaining the acquiescence or the active support of Yugoslavia, Greece and Italy, together with the practicability of reaching agreements on political objectives which would preclude such future difficulties as efforts at domination by these neighboring countries. The necessity of recognition of such a revolutionary government should be appraised, and the necessity, feasibility and timing of overt economic and logistic assistance, together with its amount and cost.

c. Breeding Suspicion and Dissension Within the Communist System.

The inherent suspicion and lack of mutual trust and confidence within the communist system and our own experience in exploiting them gives grounds for belief that we would be able to increase this suspicion far beyond what we have hitherto accomplished, to the point of systematic removal or elimination of personnel in important and effective positions. The communist reservoir of able and experienced personnel is not unlimited, and individuals of demonstrated power and effectiveness would be excellent targets. Many techniques are available to apply to these ends, but our access to and knowledge of conditions within the satellites indicate that the best chances of success would be obtained by breeding distrust among satellite personnel and between those individuals and Moscow, although such efforts within the Soviet Union should be included to the maximum of our capabilities. It should be noted that this category involves a narrower objective than broad attempts to disrupt the system by a variety of means other than marking individuals for suspicion and distrust. It has a definite relationship to and should be correlated with the defection program.

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described in paragraph 14 above. It is further recommended that where such studies indicate that the foregoing criteria will be met, the indicated actions be given priority in both national and agency programs proportionate to their probable effectiveness.

4. It is also recommended that our covert capabilities continue to be developed with increasing vigor along all lines whose eventual employment may be expected to bring about more drastic reductions in Soviet power and influence.

5. It is also recommended that this interim strategic concept be kept under continuous review, and revised in the light of future developments at least annually and also as additional categories of action appear to meet the specified criteria.

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